

REMARKS

The rejection of claims 1-15 under 35 USC §112, 2nd Paragraph has been addressed by:

- a. amending claims 1 and 15 to specify that the “controllers” are retraction controllers that lock the tubes in an extended or retracted position, and are unlocked to permit relative movement of the tubes between the extended and retracted position (as described in lines 5-11 on page 5 of the original specification);
- b. amending claims 1 and 15 to clarify the nature of the engagement portion provided at the end of the retractable tube, which is engaged by the lock device to prevent rotation of the handle, as described in lines 12-20 on page 5 of the original specification;
- c. amending claim 2 to clarify that the distal end is on only one of the tubes;
- d. amending claim 1 to recite “first” and “second” engagement portions, and amending claim 3 to clarify that the engagement portion on the plug is on the “first” engagement portion;
- e. amending claim 7 to clarify that the transmission device is for causing the controllers to unlock the tubes for retraction or extension, as described in the above-mentioned lines 5-11 on page 5 of the original specification).

To avoid confusion, the initial references to controllers 20 and engagement portion 26 on page 3 of the specification have been amended to clarify the functions of the controller and engagement portion. These functions are described in detail in the first two complete paragraphs on page 5 of the original specification, and therefore do not involve “new matter.” The remaining changes to the specification are all clearly formal in nature.

Having thus overcome the sole rejection made in the Official Action, and in view of the allowability of claims 1-15 (indicated in item 3 on page 3 of the Official Action, expedited passage of the application to issue is requested.

Serial Number 10/623,554

Respectfully submitted,

BACON & THOMAS, PLLC

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Urcia', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

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